

serious matter which should be a legislative priority in this House, because as you have just heard from the gentleman from Connecticut, it strikes at the very heart of what reform is supposed to be all about.

One of the first statements I made on this House floor last January was a support of House Resolution 40, which seeks to ban gifts to Members and staff from lobbyists and lobbying firms. This legislation would ban all meals, entertainment, travel, legal defense fund contributions and other gifts. It would get at the question of these weekend junkets to so-called charity tournaments.

I have personally pledged to follow the provisions of this gift ban whether or not it passes, and I have been doing so. The gift ban that 47 other Members and I have signed is far more stringent than the other body's proposal, and I still hope that other Members of this body will follow our lead by signing the gift ban. However, adopting the other body's proposal would be a strong first step, and it would tell the American people that we are serious about reforming the way the Congress operates, and that we are serious about restoring accountability to this House.

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Our counterparts in the other body have taken appropriate action and have passed the much needed gift ban and lobbying reform measures which ban gifts to Members and staff. However, as of today, the House has not voted to limit the value of gifts that a Member or staff can receive to \$100 a year. This House voted not to limit individual gifts, including meals, to \$50. This House has voted not to prohibit Members from accepting free travel to charity events such as golf and ski trips.

This House has not voted to narrowly define exactly what constitutes a lobbyist and require lobbyists to receive at least \$5,000 from any one client to register with the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate. These are things that this House has not done but needs to do.

In his State of the Union Message, President Clinton stated that what we do not need is a law for everything, and I agree with that, but, Mr. Speaker, today we have been given clear and convincing evidence that not all Members will take these actions voluntarily. I think, therefore, that we must enact proper legislation for those who are unwilling to do it on their own.

The time is long overdue for the House to pass real lobbying reform and gift ban measures and restore the people's trust in this body. The legislation passed in the other body is a strong first step and we should follow that example. I hope that this afternoon, when the amendment is offered, it will be ruled in order. I hope that with the rule not including the opportunity to offer this amendment, that the rule will be defeated. Now is the time for

meaningful lobbying reform and gift ban, and I hope that we can take this time to do it.

#### INFLUENCE OF LOBBYISTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. BILBRAY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, it is quite invigorating to see Members of Congress coming back from time in their districts. It is as if they have gotten a breath of fresh air of reality every once in a while. And I guess that is the best thing about Members of Congress going back to their districts. They leave the stifling air of Washington, where people start believing their own lies, and they go and really touch base with the real people who make this country operate, not those of us that stay within the beltway.

I have to say, though, it is sort of interesting to see how fired up Members are at this time and then watch how it tapers off. I was quite interested in the gentlewoman from Colorado stating that somehow this Congress is not moving its budget agenda along quick enough, and that how previous Congresses had done it so much more quickly. Well, Mr. Speaker, I just wish to point out that the fact is, yes, previous Congresses have moved along the budget, but when you move garbage fast, it is still garbage. An unbalanced budget is an unbalanced budget.

We may be taking a little more time because we are doing something that has not been done in too long a period, and that is we are going to have a balanced budget design for the next 7 years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of talk about influence of lobbyists here in Congress. But I was here a year ago, and now I am here as a Member of Congress, and there is a big difference, and I want the members of the public to understand. You watch what is said and talked about here on the floor, but it is what happens off this floor that you really have to be aware of.

Those of you that are in the gallery, if you come down on this floor now you do not see the floor lined with lobbyists, you do not see Members of Congress having to run a gauntlet of influence peddlers trying to get to a Congress Member before they vote because the new majority, the new Republican majority has done what the Democratic majority refused to do for 40 years: Tell the lobbyists to get off this floor and leave it for legislation.

So all this talk about reducing the influence of lobbyists I think sounds great on the floor, but actions speak louder than words. And for those who want to come to Washington to see the difference, as a citizen I was shocked at how many lobbyists were on this floor a year ago. And as a legislator I am proud of what NEWT GINGRICH and the

leadership with Mr. ARMEY has done to make sure we straighten this out.

Mr. Speaker, I have here an edition of Surfer Magazine that was given to me by a surfer, \$35. It was a gift because they wanted me to read the environmental issues that surfers are concerned about. At the same time, a political action committee can donate almost \$10,000 to me politically every cycle. For the minority, the Democratic Party, to sit and say they want to limit the influence of lobbyists and special interests by talking about what kind of gifts we can take, when they are actively protecting the right of special interest groups to load money up into political action committees and drop thousands of dollars on us that an individual could not do, I think is really cynical.

I will leave this challenge to the new minority: That if you really wanted to limit the influence of special interest groups, let us support the Wamp Congress Act, ZACH WAMP's proposal, which means a political action committee can only give as much as an individual can give.

Let us empower individuals to influence Congress as much as we empower the political action committees and the special interest groups. Let us have the guts to really talk about it. You talk about the donation to this Member, but the fact is that \$10,000 around being pumped into a Member has a hell of a lot more influence than what anything we are talking about. I do not play golf, so I am not worried about this issue, but I do worry about the influence of political action committees.

I call on you to join with Members on both sides of the aisle in limiting the level of contributions that political action committee can make, and make it equal to what an individual citizen of the United States can make to a Member of Congress. Let us raise the individual contribution to \$2,000 for an individual and let us lower the political action committee's contribution to \$2,000, and then we can talk about what kind of influence the political action committees and the lobbyists have on this Congress.

We have cleared this floor of the lobbyists, let us clear the air. Let us not be self-righteous at this time and talk about a contribution from a surfing magazine. Let us talk about the thousands of dollars that political action committees pump into our campaigns, and let us all work together to limit that and encourage individual contributions, individual influence, not lobbyists' influence, not PAC influence.

#### LOBBY REFORM AND A GIFT BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DOGGETT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to accept the challenge of the